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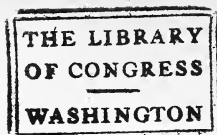
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## INTRODUCTORY

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There is a great charm for all of us in what Mr. Howells calls "the quality of contemporaneousness" in literature. The reason is not far to seek: writer and reader have at least one bond of sympathy to start out with, no matter how soon they may fall out by the way. The daily paper serves us up a record of to-day's facts; the magazine or review gives us the thought, feeling, study, of our own time. What books put us most *en rapport* with the people of the past, their words, ways, and doings?

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man, Gerald de Barri,—in Latin, Giraldus Cambrensis,—with his portrait of Henry II. of England, whom Bishop Stubbs calls “the first of the three great kings—Henry II., Edward I., Henry VIII.—who have left on the Constitution indelible marks of their own individuality”; to John Froissart, traveler, courtier, delightful gossip, and story-teller; to Philip de Comines, courtly and diplomatic, who had need to walk warily, whether he served the headstrong Charles of Burgundy or the crafty Louis of France; last of all, to that “capital I incarnate,” a story-teller indeed, whether the story be plain truth or picturesque lie—Benvenuto Cellini, worker in precious metals to the notable personages of his time.

ISABELLA WHITE.

# FOUR MEDIÆVAL CHRONICLERS

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## Giraldus Cambrensis

(1147-1223)

From the country of his birth Giraldus derived the surname of *Cambrensis*, or the Welshman, by which he is popularly known; but his family name was de Barri. Having left us an autobiography, we know more about him than about most mediæval writers. Allied in blood with the first conquerors of Ireland, which country he visited himself, he wrote an admirable history of its conquest. Like Geoffrey of Monmouth, he was a very imaginative Welshman, a lover of wonders, and a retailer of extraordinary stories; but in no other mediæval historian do we find writing so animated and so picturesque, painting of person and character so careful and minute.—*Early Chronicles of Europe: England; Gairdner.*

THE KING

(1154-1189)

(*From Stubbs' Const. Hist. of England.*)

Henry II., son of Geoffrey of Anjou and the Empress Matilda, was born in Le Mans, in the French province of

Maine, in 1133, when his grandfather (Henry I.) was despairing of an heir. He was brought to England when eight years old, to be trained in arms; at sixteen he was knighted by his great-uncle, David of Scotland; in 1151 he became Duke of Normandy, and soon after succeeded his father in Anjou. Marrying Eleanor, the divorced wife of Louis VII., he added Poitou and Guienne to his dominions. In 1153 he undertook the recovery of England; brought Stephen, partly by war and partly by negotiation, to terms which insured his own succession; and in less than a year succeeded to the English throne. The principal events and transactions of Henry's reign may be summarized as follows :

Subjugation of the Barons.

War of Toulouse.

15

Contest with Becket.

Constitutions of Clarendon.

Conquest of Ireland.

Rebellion of King's Sons.

#### DESCRIPTION OF HENRY II. IN BARRI'S EXPUGNATIO HIBERNIAE

(*Tr. in Barnard's Strongbow's Conquest of Ireland, and Gairdner's England.*)

Well, Henry II., King of the English, was a man with reddish hair, a big bullet-head, bloodshot gray eyes that in anger flashed fiercely, a fiery face, and a broken voice. He had a bull neck, a square chest, muscular arms, and a fleshy body, which last was due rather to natural tendency than to the over-gratification of his appetite at table. His figure was portly, but not absolutely of huge and unwieldy bulk—thanks to a certain limit which he

observed even in his excesses. For he was abstemious in food and temperate in drink, and, so far as a prince may be, in everything inclined to be frugal.

Nay, in order to do all he could to check and minimize this injustice of nature, and by force of will counteract his constitutional inclination to corpulence, just as though he had conspired against himself to wage an intestine war with his belly, it was his custom to harass his body with excessive exercise. So not only when war was going on—and that was very often—would he scarcely allow himself for rest the few hours that were not devoted to business, but even in time of peace there was no repose for him. For he was attached beyond measure to the pleasures of the chase, and he would start off the first thing in the morning on a fleet horse, and now traversing the woodland glades, now plunging into the forest itself, now crossing the ridges of the hill, used in this way to pass day after day in tireless toil ; and when in the evening he reached home, he was rarely seen to sit down, whether before or after supper. In spite of all the fatigue he had undergone, he would keep the whole court standing till they were worn out. But, as the adage says, “To observe the happy mean in everything is the first rule in life,” and since even a remedy if carried to excess ceases to be beneficial, these habits, by inducing frequent swellings of the feet and lower leg, which were aggravated by the restive motions of the high-spirited horses he rode, brought on further disorders ; and, if they did no other harm, they certainly hastened the approach of old age—the origin and promoter of all the ills of corporeal humanity.

As for his stature, he was of medium height ; and in

this he differed from all his sons, for the two elder were somewhat taller, the two younger shorter, than most men.

In his unruffled moods, and when not excited by anger, he was remarkably eloquent, and, as came out at 5 such times, well learned. An affable man too, who could be influenced, though of a ready wit; indeed, he was second to no one in courtesy, whatever the real sentiments his outward bearing might conceal.

He was a prince of such admirable religious sense, that 10 whenever he conquered in battle, it was only to be overcome in turn by his gratitude to Heaven. Though strenuous in war, he prudently tried to avoid it when at peace; for during hostilities he always had a wholesome apprehension of the uncertainty of the issue, and from 15 his extreme caution he would, in the words of the comic poet, "try all means rather than resort to arms." Those whom he lost in fight he mourned as princes rarely do, and showed greater tenderness of feeling for the fallen than for the survivors; he was far less demonstrative in 20 his care for the living than in his grief for the dead. No one was kinder in the hour of trouble; when all was well again, no one more severe. Severe to the unruly, but clement to the humble; hard toward his own household, but liberal to strangers; profuse abroad, but sparing at 25 home; those whom he once hated he would hardly ever love; and from those he loved he seldom withdrew his regard.

He was inordinately fond of hawking and hunting, whether his falcons swooped on their prey, or his sagacious hounds, quick of scent and swift of foot, pursued

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1. All his sons. Sons of Henry II.: Henry; King Richard I.; Geoffrey; King John.

16. The comic poet. Terence.

the chase. Would to God he had been as zealous in his devotions as he was in his sports.

His belief that the grievous injuries offered him by his sons had sprung from the instigation of the queen, led him after their revolt to live in open violation of his marriage vow. Still he was by nature not a truthful man, and would habitually break his word without the slightest excuse. For whenever he found himself in a difficulty he preferred that his honor should suffer rather than his interest, and thought it better to lose his reputation for honesty than to miss an advantage. In the transaction of business he was always so cautious and so circumspect, that for this very reason, carrying his prudence to an extreme, he was dilatory in the administration of justice; and to the great inconvenience of his subjects very slow in coming to a final decision in any matter. Both God and right demand that justice should be administered gratuitously; yet all things were set to sale, and brought great wealth both to the clergy and laity; but their end was like Gehazi's gains.

He was a great maker of peace, and kept it himself; a liberal almsgiver, and an especial benefactor to the Holy Land. He loved the humble, curbed the nobles, and trod down the proud; filling the hungry with good things, and sending the rich empty away; exalting the meek, and putting down the mighty from their seats. He ventured on many detestable usurpations in things belonging to God, and through a zeal for justice (but not according to knowledge) he joined the rights of the Church to those of the Crown, and therein confused them, in order to center all in himself. Although he was the son of the Church, and received his crown from her hands, he either forgot or affected to forget the

sacramental unction he had received. Scarcely could he spare an hour to hear Mass; and then, forsooth, so great was the press of public business, that he spent the time more in discussion and conversation than in prayer. The revenues of the churches that were vacant it was 5 his habit to pay into the public treasury, laying hands on that which belonged to Christ; and he was always in fresh troubles and mighty wars: he expended all the money he could get, and lavished upon unrighteous soldiers what was due to the priests. 10

In his great prudence he devised many plans, which, however, did not all turn out according to his expectations; but no great mishap occurred which did not originate in some trifling circumstance.

He was the kindest of fathers to his legitimate children 15 during their childhood and youth, but as they advanced in years looked on them with an evil eye, treating them worse than a stepfather; and although he had such distinguished and illustrious sons, whether it was that he would not have them prosper too fast, or whether they 20 were ill-deserving, he could never bear to think of them as his successors. And as human prosperity can neither be permanent nor perfect, such was the exquisite malice of fortune against this king, that where he should have received comfort he met with opposition; where security, 25 danger; where peace, turmoil; where support, ingratitude; where quiet and tranquillity, disquiet and disturbance. Whether it happened from unhappy marriages or for the punishment of the father's sins, there was never any good agreement of the father with his sons, or of the 30 sons with their father, or between themselves.

Surrounded though the King was at all times by crowds of faces, features that he had scanned but once he never

forgot. Whatever on any occasion he had heard and thought worth noting, never escaped his memory. Whence he always had available a ready recollection of nearly the whole course of history, as well as of most of the facts that his own wide experience had taught him. And, to conclude in a few words, had he been one of God's elect and inclined himself to yield obedience to His commands, his natural endowments were such that he would have been unequaled among the princes of the world.

## From the Chronicle of John Froissart

(1337-1400)

### THE TIMES AND THEIR CHRONICLER

In the year that Froissart was born—1337—Edward III. of England was at war both with France and Scotland. The child is father of the man, and probably the boy of ten was quick to learn the details of the battles of Cressy and Neville's Cross, and the later capture of Calais. Before twenty he was writing, at the desire of a noble patron, the history of the wars of his own time; and from this time forward his Chronicle has all the value of contemporary observation. He held a post in Queen Philippa's household from 1361 to 1369, and under this influence produced in 1373 the first edition of his well-known Chronicle.

### THE BATTLE OF CRESSY, AUGUST 6, 1346

The night before the battle, King Edward "made a supper to all his chief lords of his host and made them good cheer. And when they were all departed to take

their rest, then the king entered into his oratory, and kneeled down before the altar, praying God devoutly that if he fought the next day, that he might achieve the journey to his honor.

“Then about midnight he laid him down to rest, and in the morning he rose betimes and heard Mass, and the prince his son (the Black Prince) with him, and the most part of his company were confessed and houseled. And after the Mass said, he commanded every man to be armed, and to draw to the field, to the same place before appointed. 10

“Then the king caused a park to be made by the woodside, behind his host, and there was set all carts and carriages, and within the park were all their horses, for every man was afoot; and into this park there was but one entry. 15

After arranging the army in three battalions, “the king leaped on a hobby, with a white rod in his hand, one of his marshals on the one hand, and the other on the other hand: he rode from rank to rank, desiring every man to take heed that day to his right and honor: he spake it so sweetly, and with so good countenance and merry cheer, that all such as were discomfited took courage in the seeing and hearing of him. And when he had thus visited all his battles (battalions) it was then nine of the day: then he caused every man to eat and drink a little, and so they did at their leisure; and afterwards they ordered again their battles. Then every man lay down on the earth, and by him his salet and bow, to be the more fresher when their enemies should come. 30

7. **Black Prince.** Wore black armor.

8. **Houseled.** Received the Eucharist.

18. **Hobby.** A strong, active horse.

29. **Salet.** Helmet.

“The Englishmen, who were in three battles, lying on the ground to rest them, as soon as they saw the Frenchmen approach, they rose upon their feet, fair and easily, without any haste, and arranged their battles, the first, 5 which was the prince’s battle; the archers there stood in manner of a herse (harrow), and the men-of-arms in the bottom of the battle. The Earl of Northampton and the Earl of Arundel, with the second battle, were on a wing in good order, ready to comfort the prince’s battle, if 10 need were. The lords and knights of France came not to the assembly together in good order; for some came before and some came after, in such haste and evil order that one of them did trouble another.

“When the French king saw the Englishmen, his 15 blood changed; and (he) said to his marshals, ‘Make the Genoese go on before, and begin the battle in the name of God and St. Denis.’ There were of the Genoese crossbows about fifteen thousand; but they were so weary of going afoot that day a six league, armed with 20 their crossbows, that they said to their constables, ‘We be not well ordered to fight this day, for we be not in the case to do any great deed of arms, as we have more need of rest.’ These words came to the Duke of Alençon, who said, ‘A man is well at ease to be charged with 25 such a sort of rascals, to be faint and fail now at most need.’

“Also at the same season there fell a great rain and eclipse, with a terrible thunder; and before the rain there came flying over both battles a great number of 30 crows, for fear of the tempest coming. Then anon the

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8. **Wing.** The flank or side of an army.

16. **Genoese.** From Genoa, a city of Italy.

17. **St. Denis.** Patron saint of France.

18. **Crossbows.** Archers.

air began to wax clear and the sun to shine fair and bright, the which was right in the Frenchmen's eyes and on the Englishmen's backs.

"When the Genoese were assembled together and began to approach, they made a great leap and cry to 5 abash the Englishmen, but they stood still, and stirred not for all that. Then the Genoese again the second time made another leap and a fell cry, and stepped forward a little, and the Englishmen removed not one foot ; thirdly, again they leaped and cried, and went forth till 10 they came within shot, then they shot fiercely with their crossbows.

"Then the English archers stept forth one pass (pace), and let fly their arrows so wholly and so thick that it seemed snow. When the Genoese felt the arrows press- 15 ing through heads, arms, and breasts, many of them cast down their crossbows, and did cut their strings, and returned discomforted.

"When the French king saw them flee away, he said, 'Slay these rascals ; for they shall lett (hinder) and 20 trouble us without reason.' Then ye should have seen the men-of-arms dash in among them and kill a great number of them ; and ever still the Englishmen shot whereas they saw thickest press ; the sharp arrows ran into the men-of-arms and into their horses, and many 25 fell, horse and men, among the Genoese ; and when they were down, they could not relyne again, the press was so thick that one overthrew another. And also among the Englishmen there were certain rascals that went on foot, with great knives, and they went in among the men-of- 30 arms, and slew and murdered many as they lay on the ground, both earls, barons, knights, and squires, whereof

the King of England was after displeased, for he had rather they had been taken prisoners.

“The valiant King of Bohemia, called Charles of Luxembourg, son to the noble emperor Henry of Luxembourg, for all that he was nigh blind, when he understood the order of the battle, he said to them about him, ‘Where is the Lord Charles, my son?’

“His men said, ‘Sir, we cannot tell, we think he be fighting.’

10 “Then he said, ‘Sirs, ye are my men, my companions and friends in this journey; I require you bring me so forward that I may strike one stroke with my sword.’

“They said they would do his commandment; and to the intent that they might not lose him in the press, 15 they tied all the reins of their bridles each to other, and set the king before to accomplish his desire, and so they went on their enemies. The Lord Charles of Bohemia, his son, who wrote himself King of Bohemia and bare the arms, he came in good order to the battle; but 20 when he saw that the matter went awry on their party, he departed, I cannot tell you which way. The king his father was so far forward that he struck a stroke with his sword, yea and more than four, and fought valiantly, and so did his company, and they adventured themselves 25 so forward that they were all slain, and the next day they were found in the place about the king, and all their horses tied to each other.

“The prince’s battalion at one period was very hard pressed; and they, with the prince, sent a messenger to 30 the king, who was on a little windmill-hill; then the knight said to the king, ‘Sir, the Earl of Warwick and

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3. **Bohemia.** A kingdom of Eastern Europe.  
28. **The prince’s.** The Prince of Wales.

the Earl of Oxford, Sir Reynold Cobham, and others, such as be about the prince your son, are fiercely fought withal, and are sore handled, wherefore they desire you that you and your battle will come and aid them, for if the Frenchmen increase, as they doubt they will, your son and they will have much ado.' 5

"Then the king said, 'Is my son dead or hurt, or on the earth fell'd?'

"'No, Sir,' quoth the knight, 'but he is hardly matched, wherefore he hath need of your aid.' 10

"'Well,' said the king, 'return to him and to them that sent you hither, and say to them that they send no more to me for any adventure that faileth, as long as my son is alive; and also say to them that they suffer him this day to win his spurs, for, if God be pleased, I will 15 this journey be his, and the honor thereof, and to them that be about him.' Then the knight returned again to them, and showed the king's words, *the which greatly encouraged them*, and they repined in that they had sent to the king as they did." 20

The King of France stayed till the last. It was not until the evening that he could be induced to acknowledge that all was lost. Then, when he "had left about him no more than a threescore persons, one and other, whereof Sir John of Heynault was one, who had re- 25 mounted once the king (for his horse was slain with an arrow), then he said to the king, 'Sir, depart hence, for it is time; lose not yourself willfully; if ye have loss this time, ye shall recover it again another season;' and so he took the king's horse by the bridle and led him away 30 in a manner per force.

"Then the king rode till he came to the castle of La Broyes; the gate was closed, because it was by that

time dark ; then the king called the captain, who came to the walls and said, 'Open your gate quickly, for this is the fortune of France.' The captain knew then it was the king, and opened the gate and let down the bridge ;  
 5 then the king entered, and he had with him but five barons, Sir John of Heynault," and four others. The unhappy king, however, could not rest there, but "drank, and departed thence about midnight."

### AT THE COUNT OF FOIX'S HOUSE AT ORTHES

10 "At midnight, when the count came out of his chamber into the hall to supper, he had ever before him twelve torches burning, borne by twelve varlets, standing before his table all supper. They gave a great light, and the hall was ever full of knights and squires, and  
 15 many other tables were dressed to sup who would. There was none should speak to him at his table, but if he were called. His meat was lightly—wild fowl, the legs and wings only ; and in the day he did eat and drink but little. He had great pleasure in harmony of instru-  
 20 ments ; he could do it right well himself ; he would have songs sung before him. He would gladly see concerts and fantasies at his table, and, when he had seen it, then he would send it to the other tables bravely ; all this I considered and advised. And ere I came to his court  
 25 I had been in many courts of kings, dukes, princes, counts, and great ladies, but I was never in none that so

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8. **About midnight.** "The defeat became a rout ; twelve hundred knights and thirty thousand footmen—a number equal to the entire English force—lay dead upon the field."—GREEN.

9. **Foix.** A county in Southern France.

9. **Orthes.** A town in the county of Béarn.

12. **Varlets.** Servants.

23. **Bravely.** Gallantly, politely, finely.

well liked me. Nor there was none more rejoiced in deeds of arms than the count did : there was seen in his hall, chamber, and court knights and squires of honor going up and down, and talking of arms and of amours ; all honor there was found, all manner of tidings of every 5 realm and county there might be heard, for out of every county there was resort, for the valiantness of this count."

### HOW GASTON, THE COUNT'S SON, DIED

" True it is," quoth he, " that the Count of Foix and 10 my Lady of Foix, his wife, agree not well together, nor have done of a long season, and the discord between them was first moved by the King of Navarre, who was brother to the lady : for the King of Navarre pledged himself for the Duke Dalbret, whom the Count of Foix 15 had in prison, for the sum of 50,000 francs ; and the Count of Foix, who knew that the King of Navarre was crafty and malicious, in the beginning would not trust him, wherewith the Countess of Foix had great displeasure and indignation against the count her husband, and 20 said to him :

" ' Sir, ye repute but small honor in the King of Navarre, my brother, when ye will not trust him for 50,000 francs ; though ye have no more of the Armagnacs, nor of the house of Dalbret, than ye have, it ought 25 to suffice. And also, Sir, ye know well ye should assign out my dower, which amounteth to 50,000 francs, which ye should put into the hands of my brother, the King of Navarre ; wherefore, Sir, ye cannot be evil paid.' "

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4. **Amours.** Love adventures.

13. **Navarre.** Province in Northern Spain.

24. **Armagnac.** A county in Southwestern France ; also, a partisan of the Count of Armagnac, contending with the Duke of Burgundy for the rule of France.

“‘Dame,’ quoth he, ‘ye say truth ; but if I thought that the King of Navarre would stop the payment for that cause, the Lord Dalbret should never have gone out of Orthes, and so I should have been paid to the last 5 penny, and since ye desire it, I will do it—not for the love of you, but for the love of my son.’

“So by these words, and by the King of Navarre’s obligation, who became debtor to the Count of Foix, the Lord Dalbret was delivered quit, and became French, 10 and was married in France to the sister of the Duke of Burbon, and paid at his ease to the King of Navarre the sum of 50,000 francs for his ransom, for the which sum the king was bound to the Count of Foix, but he would not send it to the count.

15 “Then the Count of Foix said to his wife, ‘Dame, ye must go into Navarre to the king your brother, and show him how I am not well content with him, that he will not send me that he hath received of mine.’

“The lady answered, how that she was ready to go at 20 his commandment. And so she departed, and rode to Pampeluna to the king her brother, who received her with much joy. The lady did her message from point to point.

“Then the king answered, ‘Fair lady, the sum of 25 money is yours, the count should give it for your dower ; it shall never go out of the realm of Navarre since I have it in possession.’

“‘Ah, Sir,’ quoth the lady, ‘by this ye shall set great hate between the count my husband and you ; and if ye 30 hold your purpose, I dare not return again into the county of Foix, for my husband will slay me. He will say I have deceived him.’

“‘I cannot tell,’ quoth the king, ‘what ye will do—either tarry or depart; but as for the money, I will not depart from it: it pertaineth to me to keep it for you, but it shall never go out of Navarre.’

“The countess could have none other answer of the 5 king her brother, and so she tarried still in Navarre, and durst not return again. The Count of Foix, when he saw the dealing of the King of Navarre, he began to hate his wife, and was evil content with her; howbeit she was in no fault, but that she had not returned again 10 when she had done her message. But she durst not, for she knew well the count her husband was cruel where he took displeasure. Thus the matter standeth.

“The count’s son, called Gaston, grew and waxed goodly, and was married to the daughter of the Count 15 of Armagnac, a fair lady; and, by the conjunction of that marriage, there should have been peace between Foix and Armagnac. The child was fifteen or sixteen years of age, and resembled right well to his father. On a time he desired to go into Navarre to see his mother, 20 and his uncle the King of Navarre; which was in an evil hour for him and all his country. When he was come into Navarre he had there good cheer, and tarried with his mother a certain space, and then took his leave; but for all that he could do, he could not get his mother out 25 of Navarre to have gone with him into Foix. For she demanded if the count had commanded him so to do, or no; and he answered, that, when he departed, the count spake nothing thereof. Therefore the lady durst not go thither, but so tarried still. 30

“Then the child went to Pampeluna to take his leave of the king his uncle. The king made him great cheer, and tarried him there a ten days, and gave him great

gifts, and to his men. Also the last gift that the king gave him was his death. I shall show you how.

“When this gentleman should depart, the king drew him apart into his chamber, and gave him a little purse  
5 full of powder, which powder was such if any creature living did eat thereof, he should incontinent die without remedy. Then the king said, ‘Gaston, fair nephew, ye shall do as I shall show to you. Ye see how the Count of Foix, your father, wrongfully hath your mother, my  
10 sister, in great hate ; whereof I am sore displeased, and so ought ye to be ; howbeit, to perform all the matter and that your father should love again your mother, to that intent ye shall take a little of this powder and put it on some meat that your father may eat it ; but beware  
15 that no man see you. And as soon as he hath eaten it, he shall intend to nothing but to have again his wife, and so to love her ever after, which you ought greatly to desire ; and of this that I show you let no man know, but keep it secret, else ye lose all the deed.’

20 “The child, who thought all that the king said to him had been truth, said, ‘Sir, it shall be done as ye have devised ;’ and so he departed from Pampeluna and came to Orthes. The count his father made him good cheer, and demanded tidings of the King of Navarre,  
25 and what gifts he had given him ; and the child showed how he had given him divers, and showed him all except the purse with the powder.

“Ofttimes this young Gaston and Juan, his bastard brother, lay together, for they loved each other like  
30 brethren, and were like arrayed and appareled ; for they were near of a greatness and of one age ; and it happened on a time, as their clothes lay together on

their bed, Juan saw a purse at Gaston's coat, and said, 'What thing is this that you bear ever about you?' Whereof Gaston had no joy, and said, 'Juan, give me my coat; ye have nothing to do herewith.' All that day after Gaston was pensive.

5

"And it fortunèd a three days after, as God would that the count should be saved, Gaston and his brother Juan fell out together, playing at tennis, and Gaston gave him a blow, and the child went into his father's chamber and wept. And the count as then had heard Mass, and when the count saw him weep, he said, 'Son Juan, what ailest thou?' 'Sir,' quoth he, 'Gaston hath beaten me, but he were more worthy to be beaten than me.' 'Why so?' quoth the count, and incontinent suspected nothing. 'By my faith, Sir,' said he, 'since he returned out of Na-<sup>15</sup> varre, he beareth privily at his breast a purse full of powder. I wot not what it is, nor what he will do therewith, but he hath said to me once or twice that my lady his mother should shortly be again in your grace, and better loved than ever she was.' 'Peace!' quoth the<sup>20</sup> count, 'and speak no more, and show this to no man living.' 'Sir,' said he, 'no more I shall.'

"Then the count entered into imagination, and so came to the hour of his dinner; and he washed, and sat down at his table in the hall. Gaston, his son, was used<sup>25</sup> to set down all his service, and to make the essays. And when he had set down the first course, the count cast his eyes on him, and saw the strings of the purse hanging at his bosom. Then his blood changed, and he said, 'Gaston, come hither; I would speak with thee in thine ear.'<sup>30</sup> And the child came to him, and the count took him by

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<sup>26</sup>. **Make the essays.** Taste the dishes, to prevent the poisoning of the prince.

the bosom, and found out the purse, and with his knife cut it from his bosom. The child was abashed, and stood still, and spake no word, and looked as pale as ashes for fear, and began to tremble.

5 “The Count of Foix opened the purse, and took of the powder, and laid it on a trencher of bread, and called to him a dog, and gave it to him to eat; and as soon as the dog had eaten the first morsel, he turned his eyes in his head and died incontinent.

10 “And when the count saw that, he was sore displeased, and also he had good cause, and so rose from the table, and took his knife, and would have stricken his son. Then the knights and squires ran between them, and said, ‘Sir, for God’s sake have mercy, and be not so  
15 hasty; be well informed first of the matter ere you do any evil to your child.’

“And the first word that the count said, ‘Ah, Gaston, traitor! for to increase thine heritage that should come to thee, I have had war and hatred of the French king,  
20 of the King of England, of the King of Spain, of the King of Navarre, and of the King of Arragon, and as yet I have borne all their malice, and now thou wouldst murder me; it moveth of an evil nature; but first thou shalt die with this stroke.’

25 “And so he stepped forth with his knife, and would have slain him; but then all the knights and squires kneeled down before him weeping, and said, ‘Ah, Sir, have mercy for God’s sake; slay not Gaston, your son. Remember you have no more children; Sir, cause him  
30 to be kept, and take good information of the matter; peradventure he knew not what he bore, and peradventure is nothing guilty of the deed.’

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21. **Arragon.** A province of Northern Spain, east of Navarre.

“‘Well,’ quoth the count, ‘incontinent put him in prison, and let him so be kept that I may have a reckoning of him.’ Then the child was put into the tower.

“And the count took a great many of them that served his son, and some of them departed; and as yet 5 the Bishop of Lescar is out of the country, for he was had in suspect, and so were divers others. The count caused to be put to death a fifteen, right horribly; and the cause the count laid to them was, he said it could be none otherwise but that they knew of the child’s secrets, 10 wherefore they ought to have showed it to him, and to have said, ‘Sir Gaston, your son beareth a purse at his bosom.’ Because they did not this, they died horribly; whereof it was great pity, for some of them were as fresh and jolly squires as were any in all the country: for ever 15 the count was served with good men.

“This thing touched the count near to the heart, and that he well showed: for, on a day, he assembled at Orthes all the nobles and prelates of Foix and Bierne, and all the notable persons of his country; and when 20 they were all assembled, he showed them wherefore he sent for them, as how he had found his son in this default, for the which he said his intent was to put him to death as he had well deserved.

“Then all the people answered to that case with one 25 voice, and said, ‘Sir, saving your grace, we will not that Gaston should die; he is your heir, and ye have no more.’ And when the count heard the people, how they desired for his son, he somewhat restrained his ire. Then he thought to chastise him in prison a month or 30 two, and then to send him on some voyage for two or three years, till he might somewhat forget his evil will,

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19. **Bierne.** Béarn, a county in Southwestern France.

and that the child might be of greater age and more knowledge.

“Then he gave leave to all the people to depart, but they of Foix would not depart from Orthes till the count  
5 should assure them that Gaston should not die; they loved the child so well. Then the count promised them, but he said he would keep him in prison a certain time to chastise him; and so upon this promise every man departed, and Gaston abode still in prison.

10 “These tidings spread abroad into divers places, and at that time Pope Gregory the Eleventh was at Avignon. Then he sent the Cardinal of Amiens in legation into Bierne, to have come to the Count of Foix for that business; by that time he came to Beziers he heard such  
15 tidings that he needed not to go any farther for that matter, for there he heard how Gaston, son of the Count of Foix, was dead. Since I have showed you so much, now I shall show you how he died.

“The Count of Foix caused his son to be kept in a  
20 dark chamber, in the tower of Orthes, a ten days; little did he eat or drink, yet he had enough brought him every day, but when he saw it he would go therefrom, and set little thereby. And some said that all the meat that had been brought him stood whole and entire the day of his  
25 death, wherefore it was great marvel that he lived so long, for divers reasons. The count caused him to be kept in the chamber alone, without any company, either to counsel or comfort him; and all that season the child lay in his clothes as he came in, and he argued in him-

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11. **Avignon.** A city of Southeastern France, on the Rhone; the residence of the Popes from Clement V., 1305, to Gregory XI., 1375, a period known as the Babylonish Captivity.

12. **Amiens.** A cathedral town in Northern France.

12. **In legation.** As ambassador.

14. **Beziers.** A town in Southern France.

self, and was full of melancholy, and cursed the time that ever he was born and engendered, to come to such an end.

“The same day that he died, they that served him of meat and drink, when they came to him, they said, 5  
‘Gaston, here is meat for you,’ he made no care thereof, and said, ‘Set it down there.’ He that served him regarded and saw in the prison all the meat stand whole as it had been brought him before, and so departed and closed the chamber door, and went to the count, and 10  
said, ‘Sir, for God’s sake have mercy on your son Gaston, for he is near famished in prison where he lieth. I think he never did eat anything since he came into prison, for I have seen there this day all that I ever brought him before, lying together in a corner.’ 15

“Of these words the count was sore displeased, and without any word speaking, went out of his chamber and came to the prison where his son was, and in an evil hour. He had the same time a little knife in his hand to pare withal his nails. He opened the prison door 20  
and came to his son, and had the little knife in his hand, and in great displeasure he thrust his hand to his son’s throat, and the point of the knife a little entered his throat, into a certain vein, and said, ‘Ah, traitor! why dost not thou eat thy meat?’ And therewith the 25  
count departed, without any more doing or saying, and went into his own chamber. The child was abashed, and afraid of the coming of his father, and also was feeble of fasting, and the point of the knife a little entered into a vein of his throat, and so he fell down suddenly and 30  
died.

“The count was scarcely in his chamber but the keeper of the child came to him and said, ‘Sir, Gaston, your

son, is dead.' 'Dead?' quoth the count. 'Yes, truly, Sir,' answered he.

"The count would not believe it, but sent thither a squire that was by him, and he went, and came again and said, 'Sir, surely he is dead.' Then the count was sore displeased, and made great complaint for his son, and said, 'Ah, Gaston, what a poor adventure is this for thee, and for me! In an evil hour thou wentest to Navarre to see thy mother: I shall never have the joy  
10 that I had before.' Then the count caused his barber to shave him, and clothed himself in black and all his house, and with much sore weeping the child was borne to the Friars in Orthes, and there buried.

"Thus, as I have showed you, the Count of Foix slew  
15 Gaston, his son; but the King of Navarre gave the occasion of his death."

## Philip de Comines

### I

#### THE CHRONICLER

Philip de Comines was by birth a Fleming, and a subject of the Duke of Burgundy, who at that time was at least equal in power to his suzerain, the French king.  
20 In 1464, when De Comines was only nineteen years old,

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13. **Friars.** Members of the two great religious orders of the thirteenth century, Franciscan and Dominican, differing from the older monks, in that they were to go from place to place preaching the Gospel, instead of being shut up in the monasteries; but "the Friars," here, means their convent and graveyard at Orthes.

17. **Fleming.** Citizen of Flanders.

18. **Burgundy.** A province of Eastern France, whose extent has greatly varied during its history.

he entered the service of Charles the Bold, whose father was then living, and who, consequently, was only Comte de Charolais. The character and tastes of the Burgundian prince—a man of frank violence, passionately fond of war, and preferring the sword to the pen, the battle-field to the council-chamber—could scarcely suit a man of De Comines' disposition. He left the service of Charles for that of his rival and mortal enemy, Louis XI., who promoted him, kept him much about his person, and employed him in some of the most confidential and important of his state matters. In the succeeding reign De Comines was at first suspected and imprisoned in one of the dreary cages which he describes, but was afterwards employed as a negotiator. He died in 1509.

Although as a statesman or political agent De Comines had much of the cunning and indirectness of the king his master, he is as a memoir-writer exceedingly frank and straightforward. His accuracy and impartiality have been admitted by all historians. His genius for narration is of a first-rate order; his style is deliciously quaint, and characteristic of the times in which he lived.

C. KNIGHT.

## II

### THE KING (LOUIS XI)

(1461-1483)

Of all the princes that I ever had the honor to know, the wisest and most dexterous to extricate himself out of any danger or difficulty in time of adversity was our master, King Louis XI. He was the humblest in his

conversation and habit, and the most painful and indefatigable to win over any man to his side that he thought capable of doing him either evil or good. Though he was often refused, he would never give over a man  
5 that he once undertook, but still pressed and continued his insinuations, promising him largely, and presenting him with such sums and pensions as he knew would satisfy his ambition : and for such as he had discarded in the time of peace and prosperity he paid dear (when  
10 he had occasion for them) to recover them again ; but when he had once reconciled them, he retained no pique to them for what had passed, but employed them freely for the future.

He was naturally kind and indulgent to persons of  
15 indifferent condition, and morose to such as he thought had no need of him. Never prince was so conversable nor so inquisitive as he, for his desire was to know everybody he could ; and, indeed, he knew all persons of any authority or worth in England, Spain, Portugal, and  
20 Italy, the territories of the Dukes of Burgundy and Bretagne, and in his own country ; and by those qualities he preserved the crown upon his head, which was in much danger by the enemies he had created to himself by his inadvertency upon his accession to the crown. But  
25 above all, his great bounty and liberality did him the greatest service.

And yet, as he behaved himself wisely in time of distress, so when he thought himself a little out of danger, though it were but by a truce, he would disoblige the  
30 servants and officers of his court by mean, trifling ways, which were little to his advantage ; and as for peace, he

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20. **Bretagne.** Province of Western France.

29. **Truce.** Agreement.

could hardly endure the thoughts of it. He spoke slightly of some people, and rather before their faces than behind their backs, unless he was afraid of them—and of that sort there were a great many, for he was naturally timorous.

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When he had done himself any prejudice by his talk, or was apprehensive he should do, to make them amends whom he had injured, he would say to the person whom he had disobliged, "I am sensible my tongue has done me a great deal of mischief, but, on the other hand, it has sometimes done me good ; however, it is but reason I should make reparation for the injury." And he never used those kind of apologies to any person but he did something for the person to whom he made it ; and it was always considerable. It is certainly a great blessing for any prince to have experienced adversity as well as prosperity, good as well as evil, and especially if the good outweighs the evil, as it did in our master. I am of opinion that the trouble he was involved in in his youth, when he fled from his father, and resided six years together in the Duke of Burgundy's court, was of great service to him ; for there he learned to be complacent to such as he had occasion to use, which was no little improvement.

Some five or six months before his death he began to grow jealous of everybody, especially of those who were most capable and deserving of the administration of affairs. He was afraid of his son, and caused him to be kept close, so that no man saw or discoursed with him but by his special command. At last he grew suspicious of his daughter and his son-in-law, the Duke

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20. **His father.** Charles VII.

28. **His son.** Afterwards Charles VIII.

of Bourbon, and required an account of what persons came to speak with them at Plessis, and broke up a council which the Duke of Bourbon held there by his order. At the time the Comte de Dunois and his son-in-law returned from conducting the ambassadors, who had been at Amboise to congratulate the marriage betwixt the dauphin and the young queen, the king being in the gallery, and seeing them enter with a great train into the castle, called for a captain of the guards, and  
 10 commanded him to go and search some of the lords' retinue, to see whether they had any arms under their robes, and that he should do it in discourse, and so as no notice might be taken. Behold then, if he had caused many to live under him in continual fear and ap-  
 15 prehension, whether it was not returned to him again ; for of whom could he be secure when he was afraid of his son-in-law, his daughter, and his own son ?

He was still attended by his physician, Doctor James Coctier, to whom in five months' time he had given 54,000  
 20 crowns in ready money, besides the bishopric of Amiens for his nephew, and other great offices and estates to him and his friends ; yet this doctor used him so scurvily, one would not have given such unbecoming language to one's servants as he gave the king, who stood in such awe  
 25 of him he durst not forbid him his presence. 'Tis true he complained of his impudence afterwards, but he durst not change him as he had done all the rest of his servants, because he had told him after a most audacious manner one day, " I know, some time or other you will  
 30 remove me from court, as you have done the rest ; but be sure (and he confirmed it with an oath) you shall not

2. **Plessis.** A castle near Tours, in Central France.

11. **Retinue.** Company in attendance.

22. **Scurvily.** Meanly.

live eight days after it." With which expression he was so terrified, that ever after he did nothing but flatter and present him, which must needs be a great mortification to a prince who had been obeyed all along by so many brave men much above the doctor's quality. 5

The king had ordered several cruel prisons to be made, some of iron, some of wood but covered with iron plates both within and without, with terrible cages about eight foot wide and seven high. The first contriver of them was the Bishop of Verdun, who was the first that hand-10 seled them, being immediately put in one of them, where he continued fourteen years. Many bitter curses he has had since for his invention, and some from me, having lain in one of them eight months together, in the minority of our present king. 15

He also ordered heavy and terrible fetters to be made in Germany, and particularly a close ring for the feet, which was extreme hard to be opened, and like an iron collar with a thick weighty chain, and a great globe of iron at the end of it, most unreasonably heavy, which 20 engines were called "The King's Nets." However, I have seen many eminent and deserving persons in these prisons, with these nets about their legs, who have afterwards been advanced to places of trust and honor, and received great rewards from the king. As in his time 25 this barbarous variety of prisons was invented, so before he died he himself was in greater torment and more terrible apprehension than those whom he had imprisoned, which I look upon as a great mercy towards him, and part of his purgatory. And I have mentioned it here to 30

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3. **Present.** Give presents.

10. **Verdun.** A town in Northeastern France.

10. **Haudsel.** To use for the first time.

15. **Our present king.** Charles VIII.

show that there is no person, of what station or dignity soever, but is punished some time or other, either publicly or privately, especially if he has been the cause of other people's sufferings and misfortunes.

5 The king, towards the latter end of his days, caused his castle of Plessis-les-Tours to be encompassed with great bars of iron, in the form of a grate, and at the four corners of the house four watch-towers of iron, strong, massy, and thick, to be built. The grates were without  
10 the wall, on the other side of the ditch, and went to the bottom. Several spikes of iron were fastened into the wall, set as thick by one another as was possible. He placed likewise ten bowmen in the ditches to shoot at any man that durst approach the castle till the opening  
15 of the gate ; ordered they should lie in the ditches, but retire into the watch-towers upon occasion.

He was sensible enough that this fortification was too weak to keep out an army or any great body of men, but he had no fear of such ; his great apprehension was, that  
20 some of the nobility of his kingdom, having intelligence within, should attempt to make themselves masters of the castle by night, and having possessed themselves of it, partly by affection, partly by force, should deprive him of the regal authority, and take upon themselves the  
25 administration of public affairs, upon pretense he was incapable of business and no longer fit to govern. The gate of Du Plessis was never opened, nor the drawbridge let down, before eight in the morning, at which time the courtiers were let in ; and the captains ordered their  
30 guards to their several posts, with a main guard in the middle of the court, as in a town upon the frontiers that

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27. **Drawbridge.** A bridge which can be moved up, down, or to one side, so as to allow or forbid passage.

was closely besieged. Nor was any person admitted to enter but by the wicket, and those only by the king's order unless it were the steward of his household and such officers as were not admitted into the presence.

Is it possible, then, to keep a prince (with any regard 5 to his quality) more strictly confined than he kept himself? The cages which were made for other people were about eight foot square; and he (though so great a monarch) had but a small square of the court of the castle to walk in, and seldom made use of that, but generally kept himself in the gallery, out of which he went 10 into the chambers, and from thence to mass, but not through the court. Who can deny but he was a sufferer, as well as his neighbors? considering his being locked up, guarded, afraid of his own children and relations, and 15 changing every day those very servants whom he had brought up and advanced; and though they all owed their preferment to him, yet he durst not trust any of them, but shut himself up in those strange chains and inclosures. If the place where he confined himself was 20 larger than a common prison, his quality was as much greater than a common prisoner's.

It may be urged that other princes have been more given to jealousy than he, but it was not in our time, and perhaps their wisdom was not so eminent nor their sub- 25 jects so good. They too might probably be tyrants and bloody-minded, but our king never did any person a mischief who had not offended him first. I have not recorded these things purely to represent our master as a suspicious and mistrustful prince, but to show that, by 30 the patience which he expressed in his sufferings (like those which he inflicted on other people), they may be

looked upon, in my judgment, as a punishment which God inflicted upon him in this world, in order to deal more mercifully with him in the next, as well in those things before mentioned, as in the distempers of his  
5 body, which were great and painful, and much dreaded by him before they came upon him ; and likewise that those princes who are his successors, may learn by this example to be more tender and indulgent to their subjects, and less severe in their punishments than our master had been. I will not accuse him, or say I ever saw  
10 a better prince, for, though he oppressed his subjects himself, he would never see them injured by anybody else.

In hunting, his eagerness and pain were equal to his  
15 pleasure, for his chase was the stag, which he always run down. He rose very early in the morning, rode sometimes a great way to his dogs, and would not leave his sport, let the weather be ever so bad ; and when he came home at night, was always very weary, and generally in  
20 a violent passion with some of his courtiers or huntsmen, for hunting is a sport not always to be managed according to the master's direction ; yet, in the opinion of most people, he understood it as well as any man of his time. He was continually at his sports, lying up and  
25 down in the country villages as his recreations led him, till he was interrupted by the war.

## Benvenuto Cellini

(1500-1570)

Benvenuto Cellini, a celebrated sculptor, engraver, and goldsmith, was born at Florence in 1500. Excelling in his art, he was employed by Pope Clement VII., the Grand Duke of Florence, and Francis I. of France. His autobiography is his most valuable literary production. He died in Florence in 1570.—*From Symonds' 5*  
*Introduction to Life of Benvenuto Cellini.*

I seem to know Cellini first of all as a man possessed by intense, absorbing egotism ; violent, arrogant, self-assertive, passionate ; conscious of great gifts for art, physical courage, and personal address. To be self-<sup>10</sup>reliant in all circumstances ; to scheme and strike, if need be, in support of his opinion or his right ; to take the law into his own hands for the redress of injury or insult—this appeared to him the simple duty of an honorable man. But he had nothing of the philosopher's <sup>15</sup>calm, the diplomatist's prudence, the general's strategy, or the courtier's self-restraint. On the contrary, he possessed the temperament of a born artist, blent in almost equal proportions with that of a born bravo. Throughout the whole of his tumultuous career these two strains <sup>20</sup>contended in his nature for mastery. Upon the verge of fifty-six, when a man's blood has generally cooled, we find that he was released from prison on bail, and bound over to keep the peace for a year with some enemy whose life was probably in danger ; and when I come to <sup>25</sup>speak about his homicides, it will be obvious that he enjoyed killing live men quite as much as casting bronze statues.

Both the artist and the bravo were characteristic and

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typical products of the Italian Renaissance. The genius of the race expressed itself at that epoch even more saliently in the fine arts than in scholarship or literature. At the same time the conditions of society during what  
5 I have elsewhere called "The Age of the Despots" favored the growth of lawless adventurers, who made a practice of violence and lived by murder. Now these two prominent types of the nation and the period were never more singularly combined than in Cellini. He  
10 might stand as a full-blown specimen of either. Sensitive, impulsive, rash of speech, hasty in action, with the artist's susceptibility and the bravo's heat of blood, he injured no one more than himself by his eccentricities of temper. Over and over again did he ruin excellent  
15 prospects by some piece of madcap folly. Yet there is no trace in any of his writings that he ever laid his misadventures to the proper cause. He consistently poses as an injured man, whom malevolent scoundrels and malignant stars conspired to persecute. Nor does he do  
20 this with any bad faith. His belief in himself remained as firm as adamant, and he candidly conceived that he was under the special providence of a merciful and loving God, who appreciated his high and virtuous qualities.

25 He has painted a vast picture-gallery of historical portraits. Parini, while tracing the salient qualities of his autobiography, remarked: "He is peculiarly admirable in depicting to the life by a few salient touches the characters, passions, personal peculiarities, movements,

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1. **Renaissance.** Revival, second birth: the name applied to that period of European history which includes the Revival of Learning and the Second Birth of Art. Its limits are hard to define; but we shall not go astray if we think of it as really beginning with the Crusades and extending to the Reformation. It will be seen that Symonds reckons Cellini, born in 1500, as eminently a Renaissance figure, as does the historian of Fontainebleau Francis I.

and habits of the people with whom he came in contact." Only one who has made himself for long years familiar with the history of Cellini's period can appreciate the extraordinary vividness and truth of Cellini's delineation. Without attempting to do more than record his recollec- 5  
tion of what happened to himself in commerce with men of all sorts, he has dramatized the great folk of histories, chronicles, and diplomatic despatches, exactly as our best authorities in their more colorless and cautious style present them to our fancy. He enjoyed the advantages 10  
of the alcove and the antechamber; and without abusing these in the spirit of a Voltaire or a valet, he has greatly added to our conception of Clement VII., Paul III., Francis I., and Cosimo de' Medici, Grand Duke of 15  
Tuscany. Clement driven to his wits' end for cash during the sack of Rome; Paul granting favors to a cardinal at the end of a copious repast, when wine was in his head; Francis interrupting the goldsmiths in their workshop at the Petit Nesle; Cosimo indulging in horse-play 20  
with his buffoon Bernardone,—these detach themselves, as living personages, against the gray historic background. Yet the same great people, on more ceremonious occasions, or in the common transactions of life, talk, move, and act precisely as we learn to know them from the most approved documentary sources. 25

### CELLINI REVENGES THE MURDER OF HIS BROTHER

I took to watching the arquebusier as though he had been a girl I was in love with. The man had formerly been in the light cavalry, but afterward had joined the arquebusiers as one of the Bargello's corporals; and what increased my rage was that he had used these 30

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26. **Arquebusier.** A soldier carrying an arquebuse, a kind of gun.

boastful words: "If it had not been for me, who killed that brave young man, the least trifle of delay would have resulted in his putting us all to flight with great disaster." When I saw that the fever caused by always  
5 seeing him about was depriving me of sleep and appetite, and bringing me by degrees to sorry plight, I overcame my repugnance to so low and not quite praiseworthy an enterprise, and made up my mind one evening to rid myself of the torment.

10 The fellow lived in a house near a place called Torre Sanguigna, next door to the lodging of one of the most fashionable courtesans in Rome, named Signora Antea. It had just struck twenty-four, and he was standing at the house-door, with his sword in hand, having risen  
15 from supper. With great address I stole up to him, holding a large Pistojan dagger, and dealt him a back-handed stroke, with which I meant to cut his head clean off, but as he turned round very suddenly, the blow fell upon the point of his left shoulder and broke the bone.  
20 He sprang up, dropped his sword, half-stunned with the great pain, and took flight. I followed after, and in four steps caught him up, when I lifted my dagger above his head, which he was holding very low, and hit him in the back exactly at the junction of the nape-bone and the  
25 neck. The poniard entered this point so deep into the bone that though I used all my strength to pull it out I was not able. For just at that moment four soldiers with drawn swords sprang out from Antea's lodging, and obliged me to set hand to my own sword to defend my  
30 life.

Leaving the poniard then, I made off, and, fearing that I might be recognized, took refuge in the palace of Duke

Alessandro, which was between Piazza Navona and the Rotunda. On my arrival I asked to see the Duke; who told me that if I was alone, I need only keep quiet and have no further anxiety, but go on working at the jewel which the pope had set his heart on, and stay eight days 5 indoors.

He gave this advice the more securely, because the soldiers had now arrived who interrupted the completion of my deed; they held the dagger in their hand, and were relating how the matter happened, and the great 10 trouble they had to pull the weapon from the neck and head-bone of the man, whose name they did not know. Just then Giovan Bandini came up, and said to them: "That poniard is mine, and I lent it to Benvenuto, who was bent on revenging his brother." The soldiers were 15 profuse in their expressions of regret at having interrupted me, although my vengeance had been amply satisfied.

More than eight days elapsed, and the pope did not send for me, according to his custom. Afterward he summoned me through his chamberlain, the Bolognese nobleman I have already mentioned, who let me, in his own modest manner, understand that his Holiness knew all, but was very well inclined toward me, and that I had only to mind my work and keep quiet. 25

When we reached the presence, the pope cast so menacing a glance toward me that the mere look of his eyes made me tremble. Afterward, upon examining my work, his countenance cleared, and he began to praise me beyond measure, saying that I had done a vast amount in 30 a short time. Then, looking me straight in the face, he

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4. **Jewel.** A wrought ornament, of which precious stones form a part.  
21. **Bologna.** A university town of Northern Italy.

added: "Now that you are cured, Benvenuto, take heed how you live." I, who understood his meaning, promised that I would.

Immediately after this I opened a very fine shop in the 5 Banchi opposite Raffaello, and there I finished the jewel after the lapse of four months.

### CELLINI COMES TO FRANCIS I. AT FONTAINEBLEAU

*(Life of Benvenuto Cellini: Stand. Edition Popular Authors.)*

We found the court of the French monarch at Fontainebleau, where we waited directly on the cardinal, who caused apartments to be assigned to us; we spent 10 the night very agreeably, and were well accommodated.

The next day the wagon came up, so we took out what belonged to us, and the cardinal having informed the king of our arrival he expressed a desire to see me directly.

15 I waited on his Majesty accordingly, with the cup and basin so often mentioned; being come into his presence I kissed his knee, and he received me in the most gracious manner imaginable. I then returned his Majesty thanks for having procured me my liberty, observing that 20 every good and just prince like his Majesty was bound to protect all men eminent for any talent, especially such as were innocent like myself; and that such meritorious actions were set down in the books of the Almighty before any other virtuous deeds whatever.

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24. Cellini had been imprisoned by the pope; but the cardinal of Ferrara, coming to Rome from France, asked his liberation as a favor to the French king. The boon was granted, and the artist set to work on a silver-gilt cup and basin for the cardinal; these were so beautiful when finished that the cardinal presented them to the king, receiving in return the income of some church lands, worth 1000 crowns a year.

The good king listened to me till I had made an end of my speech, and expressed my gratitude in terms worthy of so great a monarch. When I had done, he took the cup and basin, and said to me : " It is my real opinion that the ancients were never capable of working in so exquisite a taste ; I have seen all the masterpieces of the greatest artists of Italy, but never before beheld anything that gave me such high satisfaction." This the king said in French to the cardinal of Ferrara, at the same time paying me other compliments greater even than this. He then turned about and said to me in Italian : " Benvenuto, indulge yourself and take your pleasure for a few days; in the mean time I shall think of putting you into a way of making some curious piece of work for me." The cardinal of Ferrara soon perceived that his Majesty was greatly pleased with my arrival, and that the specimens he had seen of my abilities had excited in him an inclination to employ me in other works of greater importance.

Whilst we followed the Court, we may justly be said to have been in great straits, and the reason is that the king travels with upwards of twelve thousand horses, his retinue in time of peace being eighteen thousand. We sometimes danced attendance in places where there were hardly two houses, were often under a necessity of pitching tents, and lived like gypsies.

I frequently solicited the cardinal to put the king in mind of employing me ; he made answer that it was best his Majesty should think of it himself, advising me to appear sometimes in his presence, when he was at table.

This advice I followed, and the king one day called me to him whilst he was at dinner. He told me in Italian that he proposed I should undertake some pieces

of great importance, that he would soon let me know where I was to work, and provide me with tools and all things necessary. He at the same time conversed with me in a free, easy manner, on a variety of different subjects. The cardinal of Ferrara was present, for he almost always dined with the king: the conversation being over, his Majesty rose from table, and the cardinal said in my favor, as I was informed afterwards: "May it please your Majesty, this Benvenuto has a great desire to be at work, and it would be a pity to let such a genius lose his time." The king made answer that he was very right, and desired him to settle with me all that concerned my subsistence.

The cardinal, who had received the commission in the morning, sent for me that night after supper, and told me from the king that his Majesty had resolved I should immediately begin to work; but that he desired first to know my terms. To this the cardinal added: "It is my opinion that if his Majesty allows you a salary of three hundred crowns a year, it will be abundantly sufficient. Next I must request it of you, that you would leave the whole management of the affair to me, for every day I have opportunities of doing good in this great kingdom, and I shall be always ready to assist you to the best of my power."

I made answer: "Without my ever soliciting your Reverence, you promised, upon leaving me behind you in Ferrara, never to let me quit Italy, or bring me into France, without first apprising me upon what terms I was to be with his Majesty. But instead of acquainting me with the terms, you sent me express orders to ride post, as if riding post were my business. If you had then

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31. **To ride post.** To ride with speed, as a messenger with despatches.

mentioned three hundred crowns as a salary, I should not have thought it worth my while to stir for double the sum ; I notwithstanding return thanks to Heaven and to your Reverence, since God has made you the instrument of so great a blessing as my deliverance from a long imprisonment. I therefore declare that all the hurt you can do me is not equal to a thousandth part of the great blessing for which I am indebted to you ; I thank you with all my heart, and take my leave of you ; and in whatever part of the world I shall abide, I shall always pray for your Reverence."

The cardinal then said in a passion : " Go wherever you think proper, for it is impossible to serve any man against his will." Some of his niggardly followers then said : " This man must have a high opinion of his merit, since he refuses three hundred crowns." Others among the connoisseurs replied : " The king will never find another artist equal to this man, and yet the cardinal is for bating him down as he would a fagot of wood." It was Signor Luigi Alamanni who said this—the same who at Rome gave the model of the salt-cellar, a person of great accomplishments, and a favorer of men of genius ; I was afterwards informed that he had expressed himself in this manner before several of the noblemen and courtiers. This happened at a castle in Dauphiné, the name of which I cannot recollect, but there we lodged that evening.

Having left the cardinal, I repaired to my lodgings, for we always took up our quarters at some place not far

17. **Connoisseurs.** Persons learned in the fine arts.

21. **The salt-cellar.** Made in gold later, a companion to the cup and basin.

25. **Dauphiné.** A province in Southeastern France, giving its title to the eldest son of the French king, who was called the Dauphin.

from the court, but this was three miles distant. I was accompanied by a secretary of the cardinal of Ferrara, who happened to be quartered in the same place. By the way, this secretary, with a troublesome and impertinent curiosity, was continually asking me what I intended to do with myself when I got home, and what salary I should have expected.

I, who was half angry, half grieved, and highly provoked at having taken a journey to France, and being afterwards offered no more than three hundred crowns a year, never once returned him any answer; I said nothing to him, but that I knew all.

Upon my arrival at our quarters I found Paolo and Ascanio, who were waiting for me. I appeared to be in great disorder, and they, knowing my temper, forced me to tell them what had happened. Seeing the poor young men terribly frightened, I said to them, "To-morrow morning I will give you money enough to bear your charges home, for I propose going by myself about some business of importance: it is an affair that I have long revolved in my mind, and there is no occasion for your knowing it."

Our apartment was next to that of the secretary, and it seems very probable that he might have acquainted the cardinal with all that I intended and was firmly resolved to do, though I could never discover whether he did or not.

I lay restless the whole night, and was in the utmost impatience for the break of day, in order to put my design in execution. As soon as morning dawned I ordered my horses should be in readiness, and having got ready myself likewise, I gave the young men all that I had brought with me, with fifty gold ducats over, and

kept as many for myself, together with the diamond, which the duke had made me a present of ; taking with me only two shirts, and some very indifferent clothes to travel in, which I had upon my back.

. . . I took a delightful path through a wood, intending to ride at least forty miles that same day to the most remote corner I could possibly reach. I had already ridden about two miles, and in the little way I had gone formed a resolution to stop at no place where I was known ; nor did I ever intend to work upon any other figure but a Christ about three cubits high, willing to make as near an approach to that extraordinary beauty so often displayed to me in visions. Having now settled everything in my own mind, I bent my course towards the Holy Sepulchre, thinking I was now got to such a distance that nobody could overtake me.

Just at this time I found myself pursued by men on horseback ; and upon the near approach of the horsemen I perceived them to be one of the king's messengers, accompanied by Ascanio. The former on coming up to me said, " I command you in the king's name to repair to him directly."

I answered, " You come from the cardinal of Ferrara, for which reason I am resolved not to go with you."

The man replied, that since I would not go by fair means, he had authority to command the people to bind me hand and foot like a prisoner.

Ascanio at the same time did his utmost to persuade me to comply, reminding me that whenever the King of France caused a man to be imprisoned, it was generally five years before he consented to his release. The very name of a prison revived the idea of my confinement at Rome, and so terrified me that I instantly turned my

horse the way the messenger directed, who never once ceased jabbering in French till he had conducted me to court : sometimes he bullied me, sometimes he said one thing and sometimes another, by which I was provoked 5 to such a degree that I was at my wits' end.

In our way to the king's quarters we passed before those of the cardinal of Ferrara, who being at his door called me to him and said : " The most Christian King has of his own accord assigned you the same salary that 10 he allowed Leonardo da Vinci the painter, namely, seven hundred crowns a year. He will pay you over and above for whatever you do for him. He likewise makes you a present of five hundred crowns for your journey ; and it is his pleasure that they should be paid you before 15 you stir from hence."

When the cardinal had made an end, I answered that these were indeed favors worthy of so great a monarch. The messenger, who did not know who I was, seeing such great offers made me in the king's name, asked me a 20 thousand pardons. Paolo and Ascanio said, " It is to God we owe this great good fortune."

The day following, I went to return his Majesty thanks, who ordered me to make him models of twelve silver statues which he intended should serve as candle- 25 sticks round his table ; he desired they should be the figures of six gods and six goddesses, made exactly of his own height, which was very little less than three cubits. When he had given me this order, he turned to his treasurer and asked him whether he had paid me five 30 hundred crowns. The treasurer made answer that he had heard nothing at all of the matter ; this the king was highly offended at, as he had commanded the cardinal to speak about it. He at the same time desired

me to go to Paris, and look out for a proper house to work at my business, telling me I should have it directly. I received the five hundred gold crowns, and repaired to Paris to a house of the cardinal of Ferrara's, where I began to work, and made four little models half a cubit 5 high—one in wax—of Jove, Juno, Apollo, and Vulcan.

I must not omit to say that his Majesty took me into his service in the year of our Lord 1540, and I was then exactly forty years old.

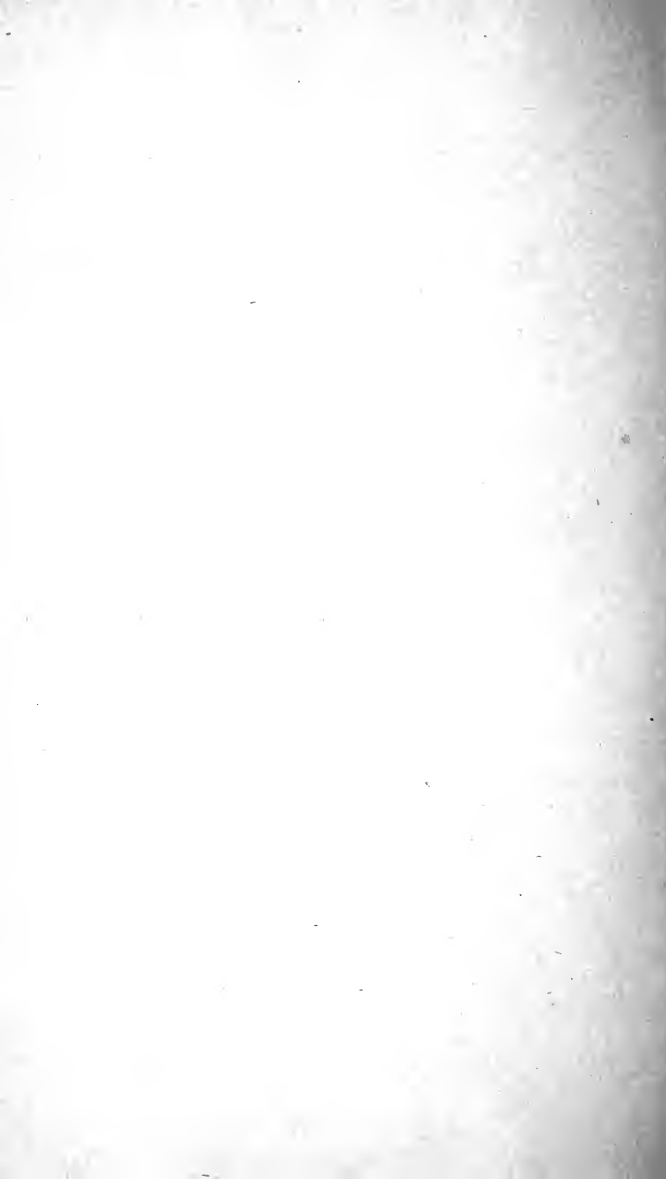
#### HOW CELLINI SETTLED HIS LAWSUITS IN FRANCE

When certain decisions of the court were sent me 10 by those lawyers, and I perceived that my cause had been unjustly lost, I had recourse for my defence to a great dagger which I carried ; for I have always taken pleasure in keeping fine weapons. The first man I attacked was the plaintiff who had sued me ; and one 15 evening I wounded him in the legs and arms so severely, taking care, however, not to kill him, that I deprived him of the use of both his legs. Then I sought out the other fellow who had brought the suit, and used him in such wise that he dropped it.



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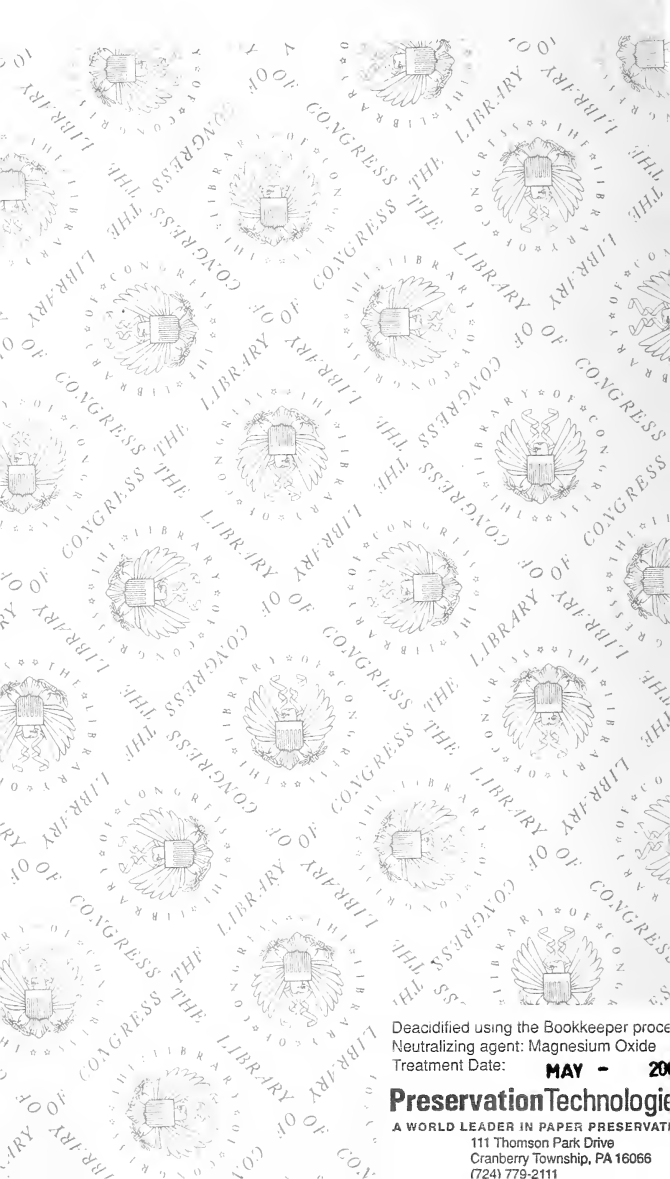










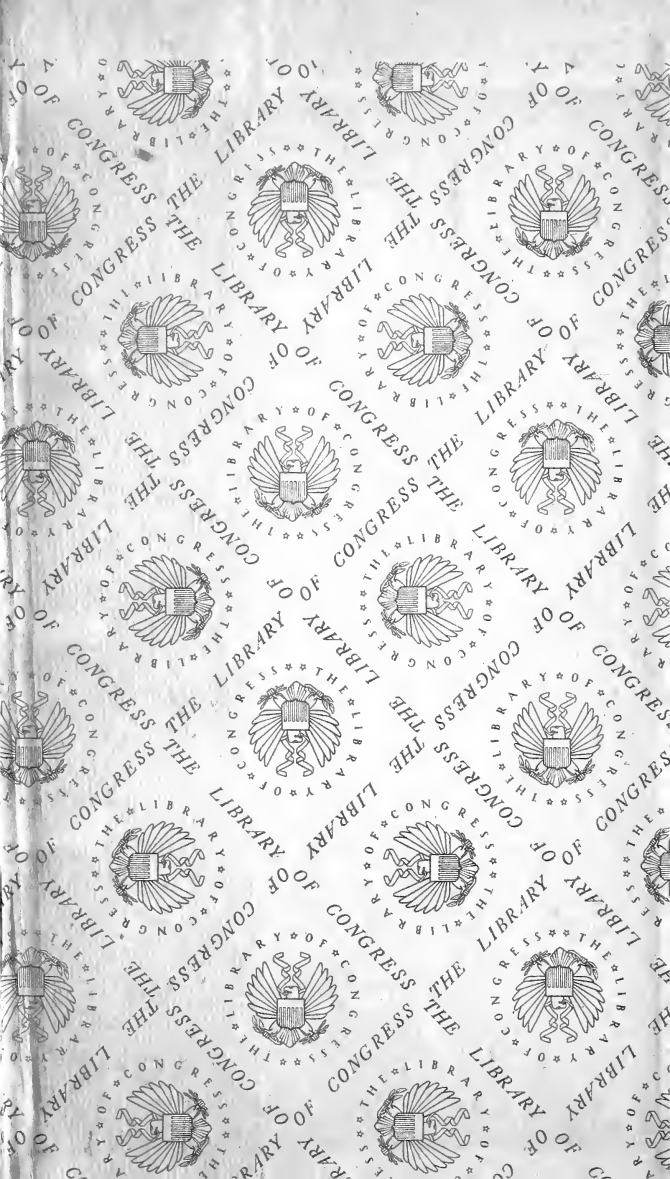


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